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Decorate with diligence

- Handle with care all decorations that are sharp, weighted or breakable.
- Check that string lights have been approved by a safety testing laboratory and look them over for signs of damage. Keep an eye out for broken sockets, frayed or exposed wires, and loose connections.
- Don't overload extension cords and power strips, and ensure all cords carry the approval of a safety testing laboratory.

- Consider how high you'll be climbing and the weight load of the ladder, and then pick the proper ladder for the task.
- Place the base of the ladder on a firm surface that isn't slippery, wet or soft.
- Maintain three points of contact when climbing, with two hands and one foot or two feet and one hand.
- If you'll be using an extension ladder, make sure it extends 3 feet above the roof or platform being reached.
- Wear slip-resistant shoes to help reduce the risk of slipping or falling.
- Try to avoid walking across your roof to hang decorations. If you must access the roof, make sure the top of your extension ladder extends 1 to 3 feet higher than the roof eave that's going to support the top of the ladder.

- Plug decorations into circuits that are protected by ground fault circuit interrupters.
- Fasten lights to trees or the house to protect them from the wind.
- Keep decorations at least 10 feet away from power lines.
- Be careful not to damage the cord's insulation, and make sure cords aren't caught in doors or windows or under heavy objects.

- Pick decorations that are flame resistant or flame retardant.
- Consider using flameless candles.
- Keep lit candles away from children, pets and decorations.
- Replace string lights that show signs of wear or have broken cords or bulbs.
- Place trees at least 3 feet away from fireplaces, radiators and other sources of heat.
- Make sure artificial trees are labeled “fire resistant.”
- Don’t let live trees dry out; water them often.
- Place a screen in front of your fireplace.
- Blow out candles and turn off electric decorations when you go to bed.
- Use power strips and extension cords sparingly. When used, power strips and extension cords should be plugged directly into wall outlets and never into one another.

- Never place wrapping paper in your fireplace. The inks used in wrapping paper, newspaper inserts and magazines contain metals that can give off toxic fumes when burned. Paper burns very quickly, so there is also a danger that flames may enter the chimney and ignite the creosote deposits in the flue.



1. What kind of laundry detergent does Santa use?
2. Why are holiday trees bad at knitting?
3. What is it that you can catch easily but cannot throw?
4. Santa was too tired and had trouble walking. He went to the doctor. What did the doctor give Santa?

ANSWERS ON PAGE 2

Happy Holidays!

ADDITIONAL HOLIDAY SEASON SAFETY TIPS

Shop safe

If you'll be gift-shopping in stores instead of online this year, here are things you can do to help keep your experience safe:

- Shop during daylight hours, if possible, and try not to shop alone.
- Don't wear expensive jewelry or carry large amounts of cash or other valuables.
- Take only one credit card with you for purchases. Should it become necessary, reporting one stolen credit card is much easier than reporting multiple stolen cards.
- Always park in a well-lit area.
- Stay aware of your surroundings. If you see people loitering around garages, parking lots or outside stores, look for somewhere else to park.
- Lock your vehicle and close its windows, even if you plan to be gone for only a few minutes.
- Keep packages, gifts and valuables locked in the trunk or in a secure compartment where they can't be seen. If you must leave packages in view obscure the view by covering them with blankets or other opaque coverings.
- Make sure your purse, bags and other items stay within your sight at all times.
- Carry your keys in your hand when heading to your vehicle.
- Look around, under and inside the vehicle before getting in. Watch for any suspicious people, vehicles or situations. If you feel unsafe, go back inside and call your local law enforcement agency.

Cook up kitchen safety

Baking cookies, planning a traditional family feast ... so much of our time can be spent in the kitchen this time of year. But cooking is the leading cause of residential fires. Help prevent fires and burns with these cooking tips from the U.S. Fire Administration:

- Fires can start when the stove heat is too high. If you see smoke or grease starts to boil, turn off the burner.
- Don't cook while tired or under the influence of alcohol or drugs – you need to be awake and alert.
- Wear short sleeves or roll up long sleeves. You don't want them catching on fire.
- Turn pot handles toward the back of the stove so you don't bump them or tip them over.
- Keep all dish towels, bags, boxes, paper and curtains away from flames or burners.
- Keep children and pets at least 3 feet away from hot stoves.

Outside Safety

As for outside, make sure driveways, sidewalks and steps are clear of snow and ice. Follow these shoveling and snow blowing safety tips:

- Warm up for a few minutes and stretch your muscles before heading outside.
- Wear layers so you can remove some if you get too warm. Also, put on gloves or mittens, a hat, a mask or scarf, and waterproof footwear.
- Take a break in a warm, dry place after every 15 minutes of work.
- Make sure you use the right shovel for removing snow. The handle of your snow shovel should reach your chest "to reduce the amount of forward bending." A D-shaped handle is ideal to avoid putting your wrist in awkward positions.
- Push the snow to the sides instead of lifting it, and don't overload the shovel – wet snow can be extremely heavy.
- Don't leave a snowblower unattended while the power is on, and don't put gas in it while the engine is running.

Have a safe and happy holiday season!

QUOTATION OF THE MONTH

"There are only two ways to live your life. One is as though nothing is a miracle. The other is as though everything is a miracle."
Albert Einstein

HOLIDAY RIDDLES ANSWERS

1. Yule Tide.
2. Because they always drop their needles!
3. A cold.
4. A candy cane to walk with!

FIREPLACE SAFETY

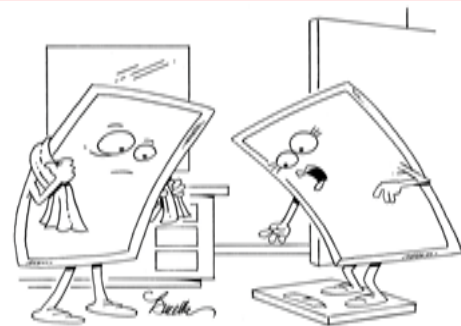
Follow these simple safety tips to protect your home and enjoy your fireplace:

- Professional chimney sweeps say any soot deposits more than a quarter-inch thick present a fire hazard.
- The soot, called creosote, is one of the top reasons for the thousands of fires involving fireplaces each year, according to the National Fire Protection Association. Creosote is flammable and should be cleaned out annually if the fireplace is used regularly. Find a National Chimney Sweep Guild Certified chimney sweep.
- Have a cap installed at the top of the chimney to keep it from becoming blocked by birds, animals or debris.
- Use clean-burning wood. Hardwoods like oak burn cleaner than softer woods like pine. Dried wood burns cleaner than green.
- Follow directions when using manufactured firelogs. Use one at a time. Don't crack or break manufactured logs. This will release energy at a high rate, resulting in a shorter burn time. Firelogs create less creosote than wood.
- Make a fire that fits the fireplace. If it's too big or too hot, it wastes fuel and can crack the chimney.
- If the fireplace has glass doors, leave them open while burning a firelog to allow air circulation and cleaner burning.
- Always use a fireplace screen.
- Keep a fire extinguisher on hand and have smoke detectors throughout the house.
- Use kindling to start a fire. Never use flammable liquid.
- When building a fire, place logs at the rear of the fireplace, preferably on a grate.
- Don't burn anything but wood in the fireplace. Never burn a Christmas tree.
- Keep the area around the fireplace and chimney clear of flammables.

SAFETY TIPS OF THE MONTH

If you plan on attending a holiday party where alcohol will be served remember the following:

- Have something to eat before consuming alcoholic beverages.
- Eat high protein foods that will stay in your stomach longer and slow the absorption of alcohol into your system.
- Only time will eliminate alcohol from your body.
 - **Never** drink and drive.



"OK...starting tomorrow, I start photographing smaller portions of food."